

LOVE OF READING.

All great writers agree that Love of Reading is one of the supreme pleasures of life. You may have many elegant and beautiful friends, but your book is the only friend who never changes.

The Amusement of Reading, says Sir Edgerton Brydges, "is among the greatest consolations of life; it is the nurse of virtue, the upholder of adversity, the prop of independence, the support of a just pride, the strengthener of elevated opinions; it is a shield against the tyranny of all the petty passions; it is the repeller of the fool's scoff and the knave's poison."

"If," says Sir John Herschel, "I were to pray for a taste which would stand me in stead under every variety of circumstance, and be a source of happiness and cheerfulness to me through life, and a shield against its ills, how many things may I wish against the world from upon me, it would be a Taste for Reading. I speak of it, of course, only as a worldly advantage, and not in the slightest degree as superseding or derogating from the higher offices, and surer and stronger panoply of religious principles, but as a taste, an instrument and a mode of pleasurable gratification. Give a man this taste and the means of gratifying it, and you can hardly fail of making a happy man, unless, indeed, you put in his hand a perverse selection of books. You place him in contact with the best society, in every period of history; with the wisest, wittiest, with the tenderest, the bravest, and the purest characters who have adorned humanity; you may make him a doer of all nations, a contemporary of all ages. The world has been created for him."

"A book, a love of reading, and education is," says Macaulay, "a companion which no misfortune can depress, no climate destroy, no enemy alienate, no despotism enslave. At home, a friend; abroad, an introduction; in solitude, a solace; in society, an ornament. It shortens vice, it guides virtue, it gives at once grace and government to genius. Without it, what is man? A splendid slave! a reasoning savage! a vainglorious being, the dignity of an intelligence derived from God and the degradation of brutal passion."

Poetry and music are but expressions of that intense love of the beautiful which grows out of a communion of mind with mind. "All inmost things," says Carlyle, "are melodious, and naturally utter themselves in song. The meaning of song goes deep. The Greeks fabled of spheres harmonious; it was the feeling they had of the inner structure of nature, that the soul of all her voices and utterances was perfect music. Poetry therefore, we call musical thought. The poet is he who thinks in that manner. It turns still in on powers of intellect; it is man's sincerity and depth of vision that makes him a poet. See deep enough and you see musically—the heart of nature being everywhere music if you can only reach it."

It is not necessary, however, that your reading should be exceeding diverse; better that, like other friends, your books should be select and choice. "He that reads much," observes Lord Lytton, "should have powerful organs of intellectual digestion; he will otherwise receive but little nutriment into his mind, and, what is worse, will damage the healthy functions of his mental system. The ingenious Mr. Hobbes did not value a large library, and used to remark, though with singular vanity, that had he read as much as other men, he would have been as ignorant as they."

"Some books," remarks the great Sir Francis Bacon, "are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested;" and there are, says Charles Lamb, "books that are no books," by which he meant books not worth reading, of which in these latter days, there are unfortunately too many; but, then, is not the Book of Books to counteract the evil influence of id reading? The volume, than which, says Sir Walter Scott, "twere

"Better had they never been born, Who read to doubt, or read to scorn!"

Every mechanic and artisan should strive to excel in his work—to gain the highest skill, and to put as much thought as possible into what he is doing. Skilled labor is almost always paid the best. The more a man's mind goes down into what he is doing, the more excellent will be his work, and the quicker will he rise above the level of a mere human machine, that day after day merely executes its task, but never improves.

"When my mother says no, there's no yes in it." Here is a sermon in a nutshell. Multitudes of parents say "no," but after a good deal of teasing and debate, it finally becomes yes. Love and kindness are essential elements in the successful management of children, but firmness, decision, inflexibility, and uniformity of treatment, are no less important.

Let us never forget that every station in life is necessary; that every station itself, but the worthy fulfillment of its duties, does honor to man.

Words are little things, but they strike hard. We wield them so easily that we are apt to forget their hidden power. Fittingly spoken, they fall like the sunshine, the dew, and the falling rain; but when unfitly, like the frost, the hail, and the desolating tempest.

— Ah! it's so—While thousands fall by clashing swords, ten thousand fall by corset boards; yet giddy females (thoughtless train) for sake of fashion yield to pain.

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